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[264] who act as cooks for the occasion. The meal is elaborate and consists of many of the same meats, soups, and other dishes normally served at a festival dinner.

Burial

[787] During the course of the next day the actual burial takes place in the public cemetery at a time and place determined by a geomancer or *k'an feng shui te jen*. A number of tables are set up in the courtyard of the house beforehand, with many baskets of food prepared as sacrifices to the spirit of the dead displayed on them. These baskets of food, as well as lengths of dark colored cloth covered with written messages of condolence and money, have been sent by relatives and friends. The money and cloth are sent to the family almost immediately after the death. The baskets of food and wine are sent the day the burial takes place.

[431] Once the sacrifices and incense have been set up on the tables, the coffin is carried out of the house and placed at the head of the tables. Many male mourners, including sworn brothers or members of the bereaved family, *ch'in ch'i*, friends, and neighbors—or representatives from the families of these people—then "worship" the spirit of the deceased, each performing an elaborate sacrificial rite on his hands and knees. One of the "heaviest mourners" (those with the closest patrilineal ties to the dead man) accompanies each one in the ritual in order to thank him. Throughout the worshipping the women relatives, especially the daughters of the deceased, lean against the closed coffin and wail aloud.^a

[602] While this ritual takes place outside the house, a small group of village men goes to the cemetery to dig the grave. When it is time for the burial, the coffin is carried on the shoulders of several men to the cemetery, followed by the mourners. Usually, only the heaviest mourners and close friends accompany the coffin the whole distance (about two miles) to the cemetery. However, many others who attended the funeral come out to the road to send off the coffin and mourners. While still on the road near the village, the closest lineal relatives of the deceased suddenly turn to these others and crawl on their hands and knees toward them. This is done as a form of obeisance, to thank them for their participation and to beg them not to bother to go to the cemetery. Then the mourners are helped to their feet by friends and more distant relatives such as *ch'in ch'i* and run to catch up with the coffin and the other mourners.

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[481] At the cemetery an elaborate ceremonial is conducted by a man who is often a combination geomancer and shaman (*ja shih*). In his capacity as geomancer, he is present to see that the coffin is placed in the proper position, and as shaman he is expected to invite the gods to the

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LIFE HISTORY OF THE VILLAGER

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ceremony and, especially, to obtain the god of the earth's permission to break the earth and to ask him to accept the body. Once the burial is completed, all return to the village where an elaborate dinner is held for all those who participated in any stage of the funeral.

Several weeks after the burial, on a date set by a geomancer, the members of the mourning family reconvene at the cemetery to dedicate the tombstone. They again wear white mourning clothes, and a ritual is conducted by the same geomancer-shaman.

Mourning

After a death, the descendants usually observe heavy mourning for forty-nine days (seven weeks). During this period they worship the spirit of the deceased twice each day, at sunrise and sunset, coming together to wail and chant as they did on the day of the funeral.

On the hundredth day after the death, or sometimes after one year, another mourning ritual is held. On this day it is common to burn the temporary paper ancestral tablet and transfer the dead person's name and death day to the family's permanent wooden ancestral tablet. Until very recently, the name was placed on a small permanent wooden tablet instead of on the temporary paper one, which made it unnecessary to transfer the name to the main family tablet. It is also on the hundredth day that the mourning family sends sweet cakes to everyone who sent money or gifts at the time of the death. The sweet cakes are a symbolic message "that things are now better."

For three years after the death, patrilineal descendants of the deceased are supposed to wear the lengths of colored yarn to show they are mourning. At the end of this period, they usually wear red yarn for a few days just to show that things are now good again. Actually, in the village the colored mourning yarn is most frequently worn for only a year. It is also customary during this three-year mourning period for the women to wail at the grave when the family goes to the cemetery each Ch'ing Ming Chieh (a holiday early in April) to clean the graves and offer sacrifices.

If in the years following a death the family has not been able to produce a boy child or has been in financial difficulties or poor health, they may have the grave dug up and the coffin moved to a new and more propitious spot determined by a geomancer. This takes place at least three years, but usually more than ten years, after the death. Specialists from Lukang or from some other village are hired for such an occasion. These men, in the presence of the closest relatives of the deceased, pick out each bone, clean it, and attach it in a special order to a short charcoal pole which is placed in a tall ceramic pot. The pot is then reburied in the new grave and a new tombstone, engraved with the date of reburial, is set up.

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RELIGION AND MAGIC

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plained easily or cured quickly by present-day medicine, or for any other problem in which the cause is believed to be supernatural. 756

The *ts'ao t'ung* also sometimes deals in divination while in a trance. At such times the god speaking through him may, for example, give advance notice of future events such as the visit of a "guest god" from a distant area like the mainland of China or even some coming change in the life of a villager or in the village itself. [787]

Perhaps the most important specialist in divination, however, is the geomancer. As we have noted earlier, he determines the auspicious time and place for important events like marriage, burial, or building a new house. He does this through the use of his special almanac, which is based on astrology, the conceptions of Yin-Yang, the Five Elements, and so on. The geomancer himself is usually an ordinary man, very often a farmer, whose divining activities are performed in his spare time for a small fee. He has generally been trained by an older geomancer, very often a relative. The training consists mainly in gaining a mastery of the uses of the almanac and in acquiring a familiarity with the formalities and proper sequences of the events which he must give advice about. One geomancer in Hsin Hsing village is scarcely literate, yet he has apparently mastered enough knowledge about his almanac's contents and the proper sequences of events to be employed frequently, especially in surrounding villages outside of Hsin Hsing. Hsin Hsing villagers, however, seem to prefer to call in an outside geomancer rather than to consult their own fellow villager. The villagers' awareness of the relative illiteracy of geomancers in general (who are nevertheless still called in for consultation) makes one suppose that the formal qualifications of the practitioner are less important than his acceptance as a recognized geomancer. His powers may not be considered to depend entirely on the amount of formal training he has had, or his function in relieving the members of the family from the responsibility of making a difficult decision may be sufficiently valued to make his actual qualifications unimportant in their eyes. [212]

Other kinds of diviners, fortune-tellers, or people who are said to be able to communicate with the dead can be found in Lukang and other such towns and cities. Fortune-tellers are frequently itinerant, and occasionally pass through the villages offering their services.

When a fortune-teller happens to come through the village, it is not unlikely that he has heard that some family there has a problem in which a fortune-teller may be of assistance. In Hsin Hsing, for example, the very wealthy K'ang landlord family had nine daughters and two sons. Apparently, it was generally known that the family would like to give one daughter out for adoption, but was hesitating to do so for fear they would be criticized. It was at this point that a fortune-teller "happened" to come to the village and offer his service to the 791
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K'ang family, which immediately consulted him. In the course of reading the family's fortune he conveniently found that portents for the future were unfavorable but could be positively influenced if one daughter were given up for adoption. This course was adopted and quickly acted upon. There was now little fear of village criticism, since the action was clearly necessary to preserve the family's good fortune.

SUPERNATURAL RITUALISM

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All religion exists to provide at least an illusion of protective control against the uncertainties of nature. Although efforts to draw a clear line between religion and magic are usually not successful, certain differences can be pointed out. Generally, religion has some ethical or moral content, while magic contents itself with a more limited scope. Religion functions to preserve a concept of the universe in which man can survive (almost always including after death) so long as he obeys the rules; and the rules are those which his religion teaches him. Depending on the complexity of his particular religion, his priests may or may not be able to intercede directly for him with the mighty supernatural beings who are his gods.

Magic, on the other hand, does not usually have a strong ethical content; generally, it is completely pragmatic. In its concepts, supernatural forces or beings exist; they may be relatively indifferent to man or may be beneficent or malevolent. The essential thing about all of them is that they are subject to certain controls which can be wielded by man (often by specially gifted individuals only). As Malinowski (1948) has often pointed out, the art of magic is the manipulation and coercion of impersonal supernatural powers in order automatically to bring about a definite and desired end. In the Hsin Hsing village area, although it may be at times difficult to draw a clear line of distinction between religious and magical rituals, both types are nevertheless identifiable.

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As to clearly religious rituals, I found that Hsin Hsing area villagers usually draw a distinction according to the cyclic or noncyclic nature of the religious rite. The normally expectable events like birth, marriage, death, and some other such "rites of passage" or "crisis rites" which are noncyclic have already been discussed in Chapter 7. I will now discuss the fixed, recurrent group rites, usually referred to in the literature as "rites of intensification."

Cyclic Rites

The villagers' calendrical schedule of *pei-pai* contains only rites associated with formal religious holidays. However, there are other cyclic rites whose time schedules are determined strictly by the individual family or *tsu* group; though cyclical, they fall into another

791 village itself. Each differs in the types of powers he possesses and/or the rituals he performs while two of the same type may have different qualitative ratings. Some specialists charge a fee for services and others depend on gifts. Nothing will be said directly if the gift is too small, but the practitioner will not return the next time he is called. Everyone knows what amount constitutes a proper gift. For the most part, the community has established rather permanent relations with certain individuals who have a regular practice in the area.

- 791 One significant type of practice involves special-
823 ists in feng shui (literally wind and water but usually
771 termed geomancy). Geomancy is related to the Yin (nega-
787 tive) and Yang (positive) factors and the Five Elements:
water, metal, fire, earth, and wood (Burkhardt, 1953:129-
33). "Geomancy deals with the supernatural relation of
geographical locations to human events" (C. K. Yang,
1967b:263). Certain geographical locations have influence
on human life, negative or positive. These factors are
especially important with regard to the location of tombs,
791 building sites, and the kitchen stove. Almost all village
823 adults are amateur geomancers, i.e., they possess rudi-
787 mentary knowledge of significant elements. Moreover, vil-
lagers believe they can generalize from previous events.
For instance, a house may be built right next door to a
geomancer-directed house without professional consultation

- 791 by duplicating the orientation. Since there are family
823 burial plots, geomancers are not always used for additional
787 burials.

[354] The most frequent call for a geomancer to come to Sanlei is to orient the kitchen stove. Sanlei villagers usually consult a geomancer from Pouti but occasionally [764] employ a more expensive one from Hsin Tien. Although the literature mentions relocation of ancestral graves if a family has great misfortune, this has not happened in Sanlei but about twenty years ago, one family removed a rock near a tomb and planted three trees as directed by a geomancer who was called as a consultant after much misfortune.

791 As previously stated, Talei Li has many excellent
823 sites for tombs with powerful feng shui coordinates. Two
764 of the most famous geomancers in Taipei have purchased
787 many of these sites. They then select them for clients and also sell the sites to the clients and make a profit both on the sale and as a consultant. One village mason [464] and two village women earn a significant part of their [634] incomes helping erect the elaborate tombs.

756 Shamans of various kinds are still consulted for illnesses although villagers believe the frequency is declining. Three different men, all from nearby villages, are called in periodically. However, trips are also made to the consulting rooms of two others, a ching tsao hsien

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[764] Taoist priests) from Pouti officiate at almost all village
funerals.

- 791 There are various other kinds of magicians, diviners,
Fortune tellers, etc., who are occasionally used by Sanlei
787 villagers. Coins, grains of rice, palm reading, and a pile
of sticks are all used for predictions and explanations.
The eight characters of birth (hour, day, month, year) are
important both in predicting the future and determining
[777] suitability of marriage partners. Astrology is well de-
veloped and the calendric cycle of good and bad days is
everywhere evident.

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793 Two part-time hung tou (red-headed Taoist priests)
from Hsin Tien participate at many big ceremonies in the
796 village and li. Finally, one particular part-time shaman,
791 a fa shih and his assistant from over the mountain were
465 frequently hired for certain ceremonies. Perhaps the term
hired is too strong for no fee was ever discussed when an
invitation was extended but the fa shih always received a
sizable gift for officiating, the equivalent of a week's
pay for an experienced farm laborer, plus elaborate food.

791 This man has the ability to inspire others to go into
787 trances and then he can interpret what they say if they
"speak in tongues" or read the "spirit characters" a man
in a trance may write in sand which is spread in a fine
layer on a table.

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787 There is a final kind of service that religious practitioners provide for community residents although few villagers would be likely to admit it explicitly, i.e., they provide justification for social acts which might be contrary to community standards or which might otherwise create difficulties in interpersonal relations. For instance, assume a family wants to give up a daughter in adoption but also does not want to create an impression that they are releasing her because the family can not afford her support. If a shaman of some kind orders the adoption, the family can accomplish it without censure by claiming the gods wishes must be obeyed. Someone can be found to interpret the god's desires in a manner so that anything and everything can be justified.

A Fire Purification Ceremony

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783 As an extended case study, I will present an account of a non-cyclical but important religious event held in [171] Sanlei in November of 1966. The ceremony was entitled the "Fire Purification of the Gods" and differs only in minor details from that described by DeGroot for Mainland China (1892-1910). The essential part of the ceremony is ritual purification of the gods by carrying them through a fire of god's paper money in sedan chairs carried by bearers who are ritually clean and have no foot coverings.

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[184] Similar ceremonies have occurred throughout Taiwan periodically with strong evidence they have increased in [18]